

Education CONNECTION

A Publication of the Michigan Department of Education

February 2012

Engaging Educators

~ A Message from *State Superintendent Mike Flanagan*

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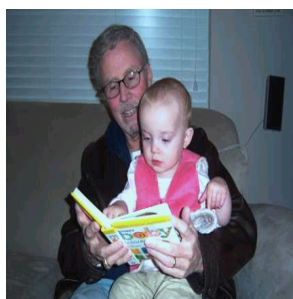
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I've met many different leaders in my life, and regardless of their styles, I have pulled inspiration from them all. But I've realized that some of the most genuine day-to-day leaders in our state are teachers.

Teachers have the opportunity to lead their students every day, and in that role, their impact on the future of Michigan has the potential to be far greater than that of any politician or policymaker. Teachers are instructing and molding our next generation of high-tech tradesmen, doctors, scientists, inventors, artisans, involved citizens, and parents.

So much is asked and expected of our teachers. So much faith is placed in them. Teachers have a tremendous responsibility that must be honored and valued. We need to trust that teachers are trained and equipped with the techniques and tools to lead our children to the highest levels of personal success attainable.

Michigan is blessed with thousands of great teachers and I value their input. (This issue of the newsletter starts a series of educators sharing success articles, beginning with former Teacher of the Year, June Teisan.) Through the course of my work, I make it a point to meet and talk with great teachers on a regular basis. I participate in one-on-one conversations at my monthly school visits. We have also created an Educator Advisory group that has been very helpful to me by sharing their thoughts and advice. The great teacher-leaders that I know are committed to improving and innovating the way our schools educate our students. These teacher-leaders have extraordinary ideas about thoughtful reforms to move Michigan schools forward.

Over the past year in Michigan, we have experienced an unparalleled wave of education reform and redesign that is intended to move our schools away from a status quo that has left our

students stagnant in the middle of the pack globally in student achievement.

We have set higher education standards here in Michigan. We are establishing a system of education that breaks through the current mold of limiting learning options for students and empowers our teachers to instruct in both a classroom and online; moving from static textbooks to a global knowledge and information resource at their fingertips. Great teachers are excited about these opportunities and are confused by those who oppose this natural progression in education.

The time has indeed come for us to move from a system that rewards the status quo, to one that supports and recognizes academic growth and excellence, while empowering educators. To that end, we are determined not to demoralize our teachers, but transform the system by removing barriers that allow them to reach their professional aspirations. A commitment of such recognition is to keep talented teachers in the profession and to identify those who can take on roles as mentors, coaches, and teacher leaders, and will best serve the students of this state.

We here at the Michigan Department of Education are finding ways to assist and empower great teachers. We now allow teachers to receive Continuing Education credits online; get their teaching certificates and renewals online; create a three-tiered licensure system that provides professional advancement and support; provide online assistance and learning plans through the Michigan Online Resources for Educators (M.O.R.E.) (highlighted later in the newsletter); and recognize and share best practices in our Education Connection newsletter.

The process of change and reform can create anxiety, I understand that. I firmly believe that every one of us is up to this challenge, in fact, many local education leaders and teachers already are implementing powerful new strategies. Teachers and administrators are the key to making this work. We are gearing up to create an entirely new and groundbreaking way of educating our kids – truly an exciting time for education in Michigan.

State Board of Education Makes Budget Priority Recommendations for 2012

On a unanimous, bi-partisan basis, the State Board of Education last month approved its education priorities for Governor Rick Snyder and Legislature to consider as they formulate next year's budget, recommending "a significant portion on any budget surplus be invested in pre-K, K-12 and higher education."

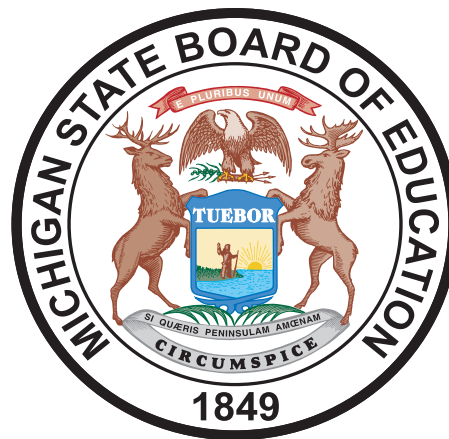
"We have got to support the reforms Michigan has made in setting high performance expectations for students and teachers, with the resources needed to deliver quality teaching, and student achievement," State Board President John Austin said, in passing the budget recommendations.

Specifically, the State Board recommended any budget surplus be invested to

- reward schools that demonstrate progress on student growth and achievement;
- support teacher quality, and master teacher programs called for by the State Board and Governor Snyder;

- expand "Any Time, Any Place, Any Way, Any Pace" learning programs including middle colleges, dual enrollment, and Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs;

- reward schools and districts that



have found cost savings in non-instructional services through school consolidation and shared services;

- support ongoing training for teachers and administrators to prepare them for implementation of more rigorous Career- and College-Ready Common Core Standards and the accompanying assessments being developed through the Smarter/Balanced Assessment Consortium of which Michigan is a governing member; and

- help districts pay legacy pension costs to realize the benefits of the true increase in the foundation grant.

The Board also unanimously approved a process to take a fresh look at Michigan education funding needs during 2012 in order to inform future year budget recommendations. A full copy of the Board's action can be found at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/sbe_budget_rec_370865_7.pdf.

Flanagan chooses Susan Broman to lead the new Office of Great Start

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan has chosen Susan Broman to lead the new Office of Great Start.

"Susan is the type of leader we need to establish and build this pivotal office," Flanagan said. "Quality early childhood development is the foundation for successful learning and opportunity in every child's life."

Housed within the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), the Office of Great Start was created by Governor Rick Snyder through Executive Order 2011-8 on June 29, 2011 to consolidate and coordinate a variety of early childhood development and learning programs and funding streams that had been fragmented

across state government.

Improving early childhood development and creating the Office of Great Start were major focuses of the Governor's Special Message on Education delivered to the state legislature in April 2011. Focusing greater attention and access to pre-kindergarten education also is a major priority of the State Board of Education.

Ms. Broman has a strong history of working collaboratively on early childhood issues. She currently chairs the Kent County Family Children Coordinating Council; co-chaired the "Early Matters" early childhood initiative, an early proponent of early childhood learning in Michigan, the Council of Michigan Foundations; was past chairperson of the Early Childhood



Susan Broman, new Director of Office of Great Start.

Investment Corporation's board of directors; was one of the creators of the First Steps Commission in Kent County; and was integral in "Ready to Succeed."

MDE would like to welcome Susan and looks forward to working together providing valuable early childhood education and preparing our kids for success.

Michigan Educators - Focus on Success!

By June Teisan



June Teisan, Michigan Teacher of the Year 2007-2008.

[Editor's Note: Each edition of Education Connection, partnering with the Network of Michigan Educators, will highlight an innovative teaching and learning approach by a great Michigan educator.]

Would you rather learn about our Great Lakes by reading a textbook or by tromping through wetlands and marshes, digging for aquatic insects in shoreline mud, testing water quality from the deck of a boat?

I'm sure you can guess which option my 7th grade students prefer!

And the active, experiential, outdoor alternative is what I'd choose every time too. In order to overcome the financial obstacles to vibrant "place-based" science learning this school year, I authored numerous grants totaling more than \$20,000 to create the Student Water Initiative in Michigan ("SWiM Team") at Harper

Woods Middle School.

This program provides young student scientists the tools, guidance, and energizing educational settings to not only increase their understanding of lake and watershed dynamics in our Great Lake State, but is supplying a useful new 24/7 data stream for state and local water preservation organizations.

Central to the work of our student-scientists is BOB, our Basic Observation Buoy, constructed by students and deployed with a suite of water quality sensors. Students are connecting with various water experts from universities, parks, and state and national water stewardship foundations to interpret and disseminate that data to stakeholders across the region and the US.

The SWiM Team students utilize 21st Century digital tools to craft a message and share about the importance of water stewardship, and the program is opening doors

to careers in STEM fields for our at-risk, minority students.

Michigan is centered in the world's largest freshwater system – our Great Lakes. Stewardship of this amazing resource is a complex endeavor - scientific, social, political, and economic factors all come in to play. Our SWiM Team is learning first-hand about the intricate ecosystems, economics, and engineering connected to our lakes. No science textbook I've seen can accomplish that much!

June Teisan is on the Leadership Team of the Network of Michigan Educators. She earned National Board certification in 2002, received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching in 2005, was named Michigan Teacher of the Year for 2007-2008, and was a Finalist for 2008 National Teacher of the Year. June teaches science to 7th graders in Harper Woods Schools in southeast Michigan.



Harper Woods Middle School Teacher June Teisan and her SWiM Team at project site.

The Network of Michigan Educators is a collaborative partnership of recognized educators working to improve teaching and learning by informing practice, research, and policy.

Michigan Teacher of the Year Program
Milken National Educator Award
Michigan Virtual University On-line Teacher of the Year
Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching
National Board Certification
Christa McAuliffe Fellowship Program
Partnership for Success Partner Educators
National Science Foundation Einstein Fellows
Michigan Elementary-Middle Principal of the Year
National Distinguished Principal
Michigan Secondary Principal of the Year
Michigan Superintendent of the Year

Traverse City West High School Teacher Receives National Milken Educator Award



Milken award winner, Juleen Jenkins-Whall and TC West Principal Joe Tibaldi at Milken award ceremony.

photo courtesy of Chloe Foster '13 TC West

Ms. Juleen Jenkins-Whall, a 10th grade chemistry teacher at Traverse City West High School in the Traverse City Area Public Schools District, received a \$25,000 cash award – no strings attached – during a video-conference with State Superintendent Mike Flanagan, held during a school assembly last October.

The event also was attended by staff of the Michigan Department of Education as part of the Milken Family Foundation's National Educator Awards Program.

"Juleen Jenkins-Whall's instructional practices are exemplary," Flanagan said. "She engages and inspires her students in ways that not only make learning fun, but allows students to work and succeed at their own pace."

Jenkins-Whall is one 40 secondary teachers nationwide this year to receive the Milken National Educator Award, dubbed the "Oscars of Teaching" by Teacher Magazine. This year marks 25 years that the Foundation has been recognizing and rewarding the noble profession of teaching through the Milken Educator Awards.

Since first presented to a dozen California teachers, the program has grown to become the nation's preeminent teacher recognition program, having honored more than 2,500 teachers, principals and specialists with over \$63 million in individual, unrestricted \$25,000 awards.

Research shows that the single most important school-based factor impacting student achievement is having a talented teacher in the classroom. The difference between an effective and ineffective

teacher can be a full grade level of student achievement in a single year.

For more information about the Milken Educator Awards, and the surprise notification events held throughout the United States, please access the Milken Family Foundation website at www.mff.org or contact them at 310-570-4775.



Titans awaiting announcement from Superintendent Mike Flanagan (on big screen).

photo courtesy of Kaitlyn Jewell '15 TC West

Anti-Bullying Policies

Although many school districts have adopted a policy prohibiting bullying, On December 6, 2011, Matt's Safe School Law (MCL 380.1310b) was signed into law by Governor Snyder. The law requires that not later than six months after the effective date of the legislation, the board of a local education agency (LEA) or intermediate school district (ISD) or board of directors of a public school academy (PSA) shall adopt and implement a policy prohibiting bullying.

This act further requires that not later than 30 days after adopting this policy, the board or board of directors shall submit a copy of its policy to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). An application, titled "Anti-Bullying Policy," is currently available in the Michigan

Electronic Grant System Plus (MEGS+) for the submission of these policies. No other form of submission will be accepted.

The following are some of the items the law requires each anti-bullying policy to include:

- A statement prohibiting the bullying of a student;
- A statement prohibiting retaliation or false accusation against a target of bullying, a witness, or another person with information regarding an act of bullying;
- Requirements indicating that all students are protected under the policy and that bullying is prohibited without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus;
- Procedures for notifying parents and guardians of a victim of bullying, and to

the parent or guardian of a bully; and

- Actions for prompt investigation of a report of bullying or complaint.

The LEA, ISD, or PSA may view the Michigan State Board of Education's Model Anti-Bullying Policy template, which includes all of the required and encouraged components in the law, at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SBE_Model_AntiBullying_Policy_Revised_9.8_172355_7.pdf.

Questions regarding the content of this memo may be directed to Jill Byelich, at byelichj1@michigan.gov or (517) 373-3623.

The Michigan eLibrary (MeL) Has Just What Michigan Teachers Need!



We all love Google™, but Michigan teachers and their students don't have to depend on that tool or any Web browser exclusively when lesson planning and doing research. There is an excellent alternative: the Michigan eLibrary (MeL, <http://mel.org>).

MeL is Michigan's 24/7 Library—available anytime, anywhere, at no cost for all Michigan residents.

The flagship program of the Library of Michigan, part of the Michigan Department of Education, MeL officially began in 1996 and has grown to include resources that any brick-and-mortar library would have and then some! MeL users can find a shared statewide catalog of over 400 libraries—public, academic, K-12 and special—lending materials on both peninsulas. This

includes a suite of over 30 databases containing full-text information from magazines, journals, newspapers, practice tests, courses, ebooks, opposing viewpoints for speech and debate, countries and cultures and much more, (<http://mel.org/databases>) plus recommended Web sites, and two portals—one for Michigan history and one especially for Michigan teachers.

MeL Michigana, (<http://mel.org/michigana>) is a social studies and history teacher's gateway to primary resources having to do with Michigan and American history. In it teachers can find digital collections of photographs, diaries, oral histories, maps, early American published texts and much more. Michigana is a great resource for introducing students to working with resources created by those who lived what we now look at as history.

The Michigan Online Resources for Educators (M.O.R.E., <http://more.mel.org>) is the portal in MeL especially for teachers. Teachers using M.O.R.E. will find tens of thousands of online curricular resources

such as lesson plans, instructional videos, podcasts, interactive Web sites and educational games. The resources in M.O.R.E. are aligned to and searchable by Michigan's Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) as well as the High School Content Expectations (HSCEs) and the Common Core Standards. MORE users can also store favorite resources, create lesson plans, collaborate with colleagues and find professional development opportunities



such as upcoming alignment workshops all in one convenient place.

As we celebrate the Year of the Digital Learner here in Michigan, remember that the Michigan eLibrary is available at no cost to you or your district, and that in MeL you can find digital resources that are reliable, diverse and waiting to help your students succeed as 21st Century Learners.

Mi School Data portal "One-Stop-Shop"

MI School Data is your window to a wealth of data on Michigan's public school education system.

MI School Data provides views of Michigan education data to help make informed educational decisions, to help improve instruction and to enable school systems to prepare a higher percentage of students to succeed in rigorous high school courses, college and challenging careers. Over time MI School Data will be expanded to provide you with more data, more reports and more ways to access the information important to you. We invite you to learn more about Michigan's Schools through MISchoolData.org.





LOW INCIDENCE OUTREACH

After 15 years in Flint, on the Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD) campus, the Michigan Department of Education, Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO) has moved back to Lansing to a location within the Library of Michigan.

The MDE-LIO is one of Michigan's mandated activities projects (MAPs) funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE).



The project provides technical assistance and resources to serve and improve the quality of education for students with visual impairments and those who are deaf and hard of hearing, including those with multiple impairments.

The MDE-LIO previously operated as the Michigan School for the Blind (MSB) on a campus in Lansing. Low student enrollment eventually ended the need for a physical school for the MSB; however, students with visual impairments in the state still needed services. In 1997, the MSB moved to Flint to share the MSD campus. At its new location, the MSB continued as a services outreach project with the new name MDE-LIO.

MDE-LIO director, Collette Bauman, notes that the project is able to operate successfully from anywhere in the state; however, she is excited about being centrally located in Lansing. The new location brings the MDE-LIO main office closer to many of the other state projects who collaborate to provide services for the

benefit of students. The proximity to the MDE, and OSE also eases the MDE-LIO's ability to work closely with the state.

Vital materials, including equipment for producing Brailled text, were moved to the new location. Great effort was made to complete the moving process quickly, avoiding a negative impact on the MDE-LIO's ability to provide services.

The new office space is housed in the same building as the Michigan Historical Museum. As a result, the MDE-LIO is reunited with one of its prized possessions from its days as the MSB—a piano used by Stevie Wonder during his time as a student at the MSB. The piano is on display at the Michigan Historical Museum.

Contact Information

(517) 373-2887

(888) 760-2206

(517) 335-1632 (fax)

<http://mde-lio.cenmi.org>

msdb-outreach@michigan.gov

Academy of Pacesetting Districts

Godfrey Lee Public Schools, Kentwood Public Schools, Romulus Community Schools, Saginaw Public Schools, and Ypsilanti Public Schools have been selected to participate in The Academy of Pacesetting Districts. With support from Great Lakes East Regional Comprehensive Center, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Education Improvement and Innovation, and Intermediate School District staff, these select districts will work closely with each other to develop an operations manual that details a coherent district system of support. The teams met in Grand Rapids in December to receive an overview of the Academy experience and to meet members of other teams from across the state.

The Academy experience was designed by the Center on Innovation & Improvement in recognition of districts' responsibility and accountability for school improvement and student performance. The goal of the Academy is to increase district capacity to effectively support school improvement, including significant reform where that is required.

The primary focus of the Academy is on district-level operations and how these can be modified to strengthen services that ultimately affect how schools and classrooms operate. Pacesetting districts have committed to meeting monthly to study their current operations, review research-based best practices, and collaborate with each other. The academy will culminate with action planning to fully implement the district system of



Kentwood Public Schools Central Office staff and Academy Team members

support as outlined in the operations manual developed during the academy.

Districts were selected by the MDE in a process that considered a number of criteria including well-run school districts, a positive working relationship with MDE, and districts that are actively supporting their schools. These districts are to be congratulated for their strong support of their schools and students. The MDE plans to expand the Academy to other districts in the coming years.

Michigan EXPLORE-PLAN Pilot Project

In a move to assist schools in meeting recent legislatively-mandated requirements by measuring student growth in core academic subjects, the Department of Education announced funding for a two-year pilot that offers two free assessments to track whether students are on course for career- and college-readiness. This opportunity is voluntary and would be free to participating schools.

As a result of several cost-saving measures in the management of its statewide assessments, MDE will allow districts to administer the EXPLORE 8th grade assessment and the PLAN 10th grade assessment, at no cost to the districts. These “off-the-shelf” assessments fully align to the ACT college entrance exam component of the Michigan Merit Exam, and provide data that supports measuring student progress toward career- and college-readiness.

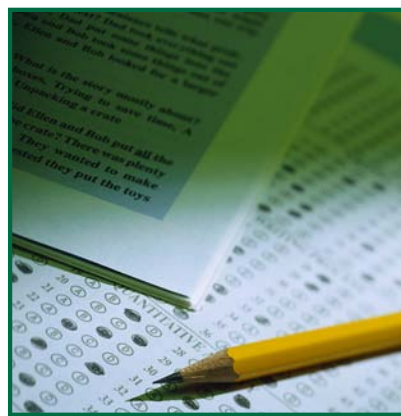
Because this is a voluntary pilot project and every district may not choose to participate, the results of these assessments cannot be used for federal or state accountability or ranking purposes. The ACT company will send the results directly to the school districts for the schools’ use. This is designed only as a two-year pilot project since MDE does not have a recurring, annual funding source for this specific purpose.

This initiative will help support education reform efforts such as career- and college-ready cut scores; evaluations for educators, based in part on student academic growth; and implementation of the Common Core State Standards. It will assist schools in meeting recent legislatively-mandated requirements by measuring student growth in core academic subjects. While adoption and implementation of these efforts is taking many forms in Michigan, student progress in core academic subjects is at the crux of determining if these initiatives are successful in improving student readiness for

post-secondary experiences and closing achievement gaps.

There will be no changes to the MME, including the WorkKeys portion of that assessment, as a result of this pilot program.

The goals of this project are two-fold. First, to relieve a financial burden, at least for two years, that many districts and ISDs have already taken on in order to get this type of information. Approximately 65 percent of Michigan’s 8th and 10th grade



students already participate in EXPLORE and/or PLAN tests at district or ISD expense.

Secondly, to provide the state and local districts with robust student-level data that can be used to inform the development of models for using academic growth in core academic subjects that districts may adopt in the future.

This pilot project will cover the costs in spring 2012 and 2013 for any Michigan school to voluntarily administer the selected measures of student achievement that are fully aligned to the ACT.

For more information and district participation, please visit Bureau of Assessment and Accountability (BAA) website at www.michigan.gov/baa.

The Meijer Great Choices Student Film Festival

For a fourth year, the Meijer Great Choices Student Film Festival is encouraging Michigan youth to become personally engaged in promoting three challenges of our future: Building Character, Celebrating Diversity, and Promoting Healthy Lifestyles, by producing :30 PSA’s (public service announcements).

In order that ALL Michigan youth give serious consideration to these qualities, the Festival’s Legacy Partners and staff recently expanded the event. Originally a competition for high school students, the film festival will now offer up to 12 classroom grants to encourage K through 8th grade students, and their teachers, to collaborate and problem solve their way to a great choice with regard to Character, Diversity, or a Healthy Lifestyle through the production of :30 PSA videos.

The project requires students to identify a problem and show the solution that leads to a Great Choice concerning one of the three topics. Within the process, students use their critical thinking skills, writing skills, technical skills, creative talents, and more – all in an effort to demonstrate to their audience what makes a GREAT CHOICE.

The Meijer Great Choices Student Film Festival also just launched a new website designed by Foxbright. To check out the new site log on to www.meijergreatchoices.com.

Community Sponsors Needed for Summer Food Program

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is looking for community sponsors to run summer food programs to prevent more than 552,000 children in Michigan from going hungry when school lunchrooms close for the summer.

The Summer Food Service Program could fill the summer hunger gap for hundreds of thousands of children if more sponsors are signed up to run the food program. Last year, out of the over 552,000 low-income Michigan children who were eligible, only around 85,000 (15 percent) were served the free meals or snacks at approved summer meal sites in their neighborhoods.

"Many families across Michigan are struggling, and we can't have children going hungry in the summer when programs like this are available," state Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan said. "I am calling on schools, churches, and local government and civic organizations to step up and have a positive impact on the lives and health of children in their community by being a Summer Food Service Program sponsor."

Research shows a direct relationship between good nutrition and learning. The Summer Food Service Program is a key building block in Michigan communities to develop healthy, happy kids who are ready to learn.



"There is a desperate need and the food is available," Flanagan said. "We just need more locations around the state to serve the children."

Sponsors receive federal payments for both the meals served to children and the administrative costs of serving the meals.

New sponsors will receive free training and technical assistance from MDE.

The Summer Food Service Program serves nutritious meals to children up to age 18 living in low-income areas (where 50 percent or more of the students qualify for free or reduced price school meals). The program can operate in schools, public housing centers, playgrounds, camps, parks, and faith-based facilities.

Sponsors can be public school districts or nonprofit private schools; public or private nonprofit residential summer camps; local, county or state government agencies; colleges or universities; or private nonprofit organizations.

To sponsor the program this summer, organizations need to contact MDE by March 31, 2012. Applications and sponsor information may be obtained from MDE's Grants Coordination and School Support office, Summer Food Service Program, 608 W. Allegan Street, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909, 517-373-3347; or on the MDE website at: www.michigan.gov/sfsp.

Congrats Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy!

The Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy has been recognized for their efforts to meet the [HealthierUS School Challenge](#) (HUSC), a voluntary national certification initiative for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. The



Superintendent Aimee Alaniz and Business Manager Diane Davis at the White House.

USDA created the HUSC to recognize schools that maintain healthy environments by improving the quality of meals and increasing physical activity and nutrition education. It is also a key component of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign.

The Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy has been awarded the Bronze certification, and received a \$500 award, certificate of recognition, plaque, and banner. In addition, two representatives from the school were invited to a reception on the White House lawn hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama.

On October 17, 2011, Superintendent Aimee Alaniz and Business Manager Di-



First Lady Michelle Obama addressing HUSC winners during White House reception.

ane Davis attended the reception with other award winners from across the nation. First Lady Michelle Obama spoke to the crowd then greeted some of the recipients. Mrs. Alaniz and Mrs. Davis were among the fortunate to be able to shake the First Lady's hand, as she personally thanked them for their efforts.

YEAR OF THE DIGITAL LEARNER

Michigan Department of Education, in partnership with the Alliance for Excellent Education, announced today its participation as a state host in the first-ever Digital Learning Day campaign and kick off to Michigan's "Year of the Digital Learner."

This national campaign is designed to celebrate innovative teaching and high-light practices that make learning more personalized and engaging for students, exploring how digital learning can provide all students with the opportunities they deserve — to build the skills needed to succeed in college, a career, and life.

Through this work and by hosting Digital Learning Day on February 1, 2012, Michigan strives to build momentum for a wave of innovation that changes policies, shifts attitudes, and supports wide-scale adoption of these promising instructional practices. Digital Learning Day will be

the start of a year of digital learning activities to be designated as 2012 Year of the Digital Learner.

All education stakeholders—parents; teachers; students; librarians; administrators; policymakers; and school, district, and business leaders—are encouraged to sign up now. Participants will have access to targeted toolkits outlining ideas and ways to plan their Digital Learning Day celebration, as well as updates, informational videos, webinars, and other resources.

No matter the approach, no matter the grade level, no matter the subject or geographic location, no matter a teacher's specific comfort with using technology, this campaign will challenge education professionals and policymakers at all levels to start a conversation, improve a lesson, and/or create a plan.

To learn more about how to be a part of this groundbreaking event, sign up at <http://www.digitalllearningday.org>.



Flanagan Touts Free Educator Resources

Where can you go when you need prompt, reliable education resources?

State Superintendent Mike Flanagan highlights some extraordinary tools for Michigan educators, available from the state's award-winning online information support system – tools that can help educators increase student performance and reach Performance Funding goals.

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-37818_45256-264795--,00.html.

MeL Tutorial: <http://www.mistreamnet.com/vidflv.php?who=mde.meltutorial.021012>.

For more information about the Michigan Electronic Library and its wealth of information, contact Deb Biggs Thomas, Library Outreach Coordinator, at biggstthomasd@michigan.gov.

Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes!

Hopefully at this point, you've noticed the Education Connection Newsletter has a new look and format. We at the Department are also working hard at keeping ahead of the curve during these times of rapid advances and changes. So, to that end, we are giving the newsletter a bit of a face lift. We hope you find this new look more organic, sleek, and easier to read.

We would like to especially thank Kimberly Mull, Graphic Designer, Bureau of Assessment and Accountability for her imagination and her time redesigning and updating our newsletter. We will continue to fine-tune this publication, and would appreciate any ideas, thoughts or submission you may have to make this a robust periodical.

ENJOY!

WHAT'S NEXT

[Educator Evaluations Conference](#) February 29, 2012

[Statewide Special Education Conf](#) Feb 29-March 2, 2012

[MI School Counselor Conference](#) February 29, 2012

[2012 MACUL Conference](#) March 7-9, 2012

[MI Science Teachers Assoc Conference](#) March 8-10, 2012

[State Board of Education Meeting](#) March 13, 2012

[MAMSE State Conference](#) March 22-23, 2012

[MDE/NCA School Improvement Conference](#) March 29-30, 2012

ON THE HORIZON

[MSBO Annual Conference](#) May 1-3, 2012

[Michigan Social Studies Olympiad XXVI](#) May 5, 2012

[Michigan Joint Education Conference](#) June 20, 2012

[MCTM 2012 Conference](#) August 1-2, 2012

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